



FREEDOM WATCH



Aug. 14, 2002

Published in the interest of those serving in Operation Enduring Freedom

Bagram, Afghanistan

News briefs

(Compiled from CNN.com)

Double-trouble in Orgun-e

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan – A civilian was ambushed while driving his truck between Gardez and Khowst yesterday. U.S. Air Force personnel transported him by HH-60 MEDEVAC helicopter to the Orgun-e forward surgical team. After dropping the patient off, the helicopter took off, travelling approximately 100 feet before it hit the ground. "It was an accident," said a Combined Joint Task Force-180 spokesman. All six airmen on board walked away with minor injuries.

Anthrax detected in mailbox test

WASHINGTON – Investigators believe they may have found out where some of the anthrax-laced letters were mailed last fall, the Postal Inspection Service said Monday. The

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Photo by Pfc. Matthew Acosta

Dust storms

Dust is kicked up as a pair of Army CH-47 D Chinook helicopters prepare to land with supplies for 82nd Airborne Division paratroopers during Operation Enduring Freedom in the Khandahar region of Afghanistan.

Rumsfeld describes what he'd like to see in Iraq govt.

By Sgt. 1st Class Kathleen T. Rhem
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – Secretary Donald Rumsfeld today described his vision of an ideal replacement government for the regime of

Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. He told reporters about four things he'd like to see.

First, "we would like to see a country that is a single country and not have Iraq broken up into pieces," Rumsfeld said in a Pentagon media briefing.

Second, America would like to see a country that "forswears weapons of mass destruction." Rumsfeld said he'd like to see an Iraqi government that says, "We're not going to take the people's money and invest in chemical, biological and nuclear weapons —

which they are doing today."

He said much of the money Iraq has been receiving under the U.N. oil-for-food program pays for Hussein's development of weapons of

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92nd Engineers return home from Afghanistan

By Spc. Mason T. Lowery
Army News Service

FORT STEWART, Ga. – After seven months building base camps and repairing dilapidated buildings in Afghanistan, an engineer company returned home Aug. 4 to Fort Stewart, Ga.

"We did a lot of construction upgrades for the area. We pretty much built the whole thing up from ground zero," said Staff Sgt. Vincent E. Bourket, construction supervisor for Company A, 92nd Engineer Battalion. "There wasn't anything there when we got there. We built accommodations for the incoming soldiers, to better their living conditions."

The engineers were deployed to the Khandahar region in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

"We assisted the 101st (Airborne Division, Fort Campbell, Ky.) engineers doing runway repair," said Capt. Robert Croke, assistant battalion S3. "We built a lot of tents, electrical installation and earthwork."

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We put gravel down at all the life-support areas to get soldiers out of the dust.”

Everyone had a specific role, company soldiers said.

Sgt. James Lilly, mechanic, said, “Basically I fixed everything that it took to keep these guys rolling.”

The engineering company will take a couple of days off to get over jet lag, Croke said, then the soldiers will come to work to in-process and finally take a hard-earned block of leave until after Labor Day weekend.

The engineers were proud of their accomplishments, but it was apparent from the hugs and kisses they dished out to friends and family members that they were happy to be home.

“It’s just great to be back. It’s been a long seven months,” Bourket said.

It’s great to see the family again, great to see some civilization, Lilly added.

“I’m going to see Lenny Kravitz and Pink in Atlanta,” Croke said.



Photo by Spc. Mason T. Lowery
Staff Sgt. Vincent E. Bourket hugs his daughters, Corey, 6, and Raven, 2, as he gets off the bus returning home to Fort Stewart from Afghanistan.

Forces conduct cordon, search operation in Afghanistan

By Jim Garamone

Armed Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON—U.S. forces conducted a “cordon and search” operation in Afghanistan, and forces detained three suspected al Qaeda fighters, Defense Department officials said Aug. 12.

Over the weekend, U.S. special operations forces and members of the 82nd Airborne Division’s Task Force Panther conducted the cordon and search operation in Paktika province. The province, on the border with Pakistan, was a stronghold of the Taliban. U.S. forces have conducted a number of operations in the region.

Beginning Saturday morning, personnel cordoned off the area in the vicinity of Malaksay, north of the town of Shkin. U.S. forces then searched the area for Taliban and al Qaeda fighters, intelligence about the Taliban and al Qaeda, and arms caches.

U.S. forces discovered a cache of 50 rocket-propelled grenades.

U.S. officials in Afghanistan said there was no fighting during the operation nor was anyone detained.

On Saturday, U.S. special operations forces personnel detained three suspected al Qaeda fighters near the border town of Khowst. The special operators took the three to U.S. facilities at Bagram air base, where they are being questioned. U.S. forces also discovered a cache of arms in this area. The cache includes 200 feet of detonation cord, 10 high explosive charges and 82 mortar rounds.

Defense officials announced today that Army Sgt. 1st Class Christopher James Speer died Aug. 7 of wounds he received in Afghanistan July 27. Speer died at the Army hospital in Landstuhl, Germany. Four other soldiers were wounded in the firefight near Khowst. Two were treated at the U.S. medical facility in Bagram and were released. Two others were also transported to Germany and are recovering from their injuries.

Speer, 28, was assigned to Headquarters U.S. Army Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, N.C.

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mass destruction.

“Third, we’d like to see a regime that decided it didn’t need to invade its neighbors,” Rumsfeld said. He described this provision as “kind of a reasonable thing.”

And fourth, he said, the Iraqi people ought to have a voice in running their own country. He said the Iraqis should have institutions that have served other countries across the globe so well — “some reasonable rule of law, some respect for the rights of minorities, and some way for the people to have their

views represented.”

Rumsfeld noted that the U.S. government’s official policy since 1998 has been to work toward regime change in Iraq and that such a change might be “untidy.” But that shouldn’t be reason enough to not promote change.

“Democracy is untidy. Freedom is untidy. Liberation is untidy,” he said.

Also at the briefing, Air Force Gen. Richard Myers, Joint Chiefs chairman, dismissed recent comments by Saddam Hussein as “bluster.” Hussein said Aug. 8 that any troops invading Iraq would be “buried.”

Myers called such remarks “fairly characteristic of the Iraqi regime and the man himself.”

Rumsfeld went on to explain that the United States’ previous policy of containment isn’t working with regards to Hussein. He said economic sanctions historically have only worked for a limited time, and that time has passed in Iraq’s case.

“It is very clear that the political and economic sanctions with respect to Saddam Hussein have not worked,” he said.

Operations Northern and Southern Watch have only had limited success as well, Rumsfeld said, noting Hussein

still has anti-aircraft weapons in those areas.

“He’s not hit us fortuitously, but by the same token we’ve not done a great deal of damage to his air defenses,” the secretary said.

He also pointed out that after the Persian Gulf War, Hussein agreed not to build a weapons-of-mass-destruction program. “We know he does have one, and he is continuing it,” Rumsfeld said.

“There’s no way any reasonable person could look at that record and say that (the policy of sanctions alone has) worked,” he said. “It hasn’t worked, and it’s not working.”

HIND SIGHT

1457

The first book ever printed is published by a German astrologer named Faust. He is thrown in jail while trying to sell books in Paris. Authorities concluded that all the identical books meant Faust had dealt with the devil.

1559

Spanish explorer de Luna enters Pensacola Bay, Fla. Tales of the adventures of three conquistadors and their Moorish slave during the 16th century led to Spain's Francisco Vasquez de Coronado's exploration America's Southwest.

1605

The Popham expedition reaches the Sagadahoc River in present-day Maine and settles there.

1756

French commander Louis Montcalm takes Fort Oswego, New England, from the British.

service made the statement after preliminary tests detected anthrax on a mail collection box in Princeton, New Jersey.

It was the first box in the New Jersey area to test positive, said spokesman Dan Milhalko. About 300 mail collection boxes whose contents flow into the Trenton area have been tested so far.

Cracks in haulers could delay Atlantis launch

KENNEDY SPACE CENTER, Fla. — NASA said cracks in equipment could mean more delays for the launch of shuttle Atlantis.

The cracks were found in the bearings of the massive 1960s-vintage movers used to haul space shuttles to the launch pads. The problem was reported Monday just as technicians finished fixing fuel-line cracks inside shuttle Atlantis.

"It's too soon to tell what impact, if any, there would be on the schedule," said NASA spokesman George Diller.

Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER REPORT:

	<i>Today</i>	<i>Thursday</i>
<u>Bagram:</u>	<i>Dusty</i> H: 95F L: 73F	<i>Dusty</i> H: 95F L: 72F
<u>Khandahar:</u>	<i>Sunny</i> H: 106F L: 73F	<i>Dusty</i> H: 108F L: 73F
<u>Kabul:</u>	<i>Haze</i> H: 95F L: 73F	<i>Mostly clear</i> H: 93F L: 73F
<u>Uzbekistan:</u>	<i>Clear</i> H: 106F L: 70F	<i>Clear</i> H: 105F L: 70F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

FREEDOM WATCH

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COALITION SPORTSZONE

Union could set strike date by Friday

NEW YORK — Baseball's top labor lawyer said Tuesday it was possible a bargaining agreement could be reached "in the next several days" to avert a threatened walkout by players.

One day after the union held off setting a strike date, talks resumed and focused on two key issues: management's desire for increased revenue sharing and a luxury tax that would restrain spending by high-payroll teams.

Though neither side pointed to any specific progress, management lawyer Rob Manfred said: "I think both parties feel tremendous pressure to get this resolved as quickly as possible."

The union's executive board has scheduled a telephone conference call Friday, and could set a strike date then if it thinks a deal isn't close. If a date is set this week, Aug. 30 is the most likely one to be picked, a person familiar with the players' deliberations said, speaking on the condition he not be identified.

Asked if he thought a settlement could be reached before the conference call, Manfred replied: "Friday is a little too specific for me. I continue to believe we are close enough that it is possible to make an agreement in the next several days."

Union head Donald Fehr was more reticent in discussing the latest session.

"At this stage, daily running commentary is not something, I would suggest, that would enhance rather detract from making a deal," he said.

But Johnny Damon of the Boston Red Sox said players "get the feeling the owners think we can get something done by the end of the week."

"If they really want to work with us, we're ready, but if not, a date might have to be set," he said.

Both sides say the luxury tax is the biggest hurdle to a settlement, disagreeing on what it is supposed to do.

ESPN.com's Jayson Stark reported Tuesday that both sides exchanged luxury tax proposals on Tuesday and may meet again in the evening.

The union made the first proposal at a meeting that lasted less than 30 minutes and the owners countered with a proposal at an hour-long meeting later in the day.

The owners are awaiting a response from the union. The second meeting included the full negotiating teams on both sides. After meeting at commissioner Bud Selig's office following the first session, the owners' negotiating team walked over to union headquarters in New York to start the late session.

"We view it as certainly something that artificially restrains payroll," Fehr said. "But one of the things it does is transfer money. He's being grossly oversimplistic."

For Manfred, a stiffer luxury tax is a must.

2002 Major League standings

American League East			GB
N.Y. Yankees	72-44	.621	-
Boston	68-48	.586	4
Baltimore	56-59	.487	15.5
American League Central			GB
Minnesota	70-49	.588	-
Chicago (AL)	57-62	.479	13
Cleveland	51-65	.440	17.5
American League West			GB
Seattle	72-46	.610	-
Anaheim	69-48	.590	2.5
Oakland	68-51	.571	4.5
National League East			GB
Atlanta	77-40	.658	-
N.Y. Mets	58-59	.496	19
Montreal	58-59	.496	19
National League Central			GB
St. Louis	63-52	.548	-
Cincinnati	61-55	.526	2.5
Houston	61-56	.521	3
National League West			GB
Arizona	73-45	.619	-
Los Angeles	66-52	.559	7
San Francisco	65-52	.556	7.5

Tuesday's scores

Cleveland 9-5 Tampa Bay
 Houston 5-4 Chicago Cubs
 N.Y. Yankees 10-5 Kansas City
 Montreal 4-3 Los Angeles
 Minnesota 6-0 Baltimore
 Philadelphia 3-1 Milwaukee
 Chicago W. Sox 12-3 Texas
 St. Louis 9-5 Pittsburgh
 Detroit 5-5 Anaheim, Top 6th
 Colorado 5-4 Florida
 Toronto 3-3 Oakland, Btm 7th
 Seattle 6-1 Boston, Top 5th
 Arizona 6-1 Cincinnati
 San Diego 7-2 N.Y. Mets
 San Francisco 7-2 Atlanta

Today's schedule

Houston at Chicago Cubs
 Los Angeles at Montreal
 Milwaukee at Philadelphia
 St. Louis at Pittsburgh
 Colorado at Florida
 Arizona at Cincinnati
 San Diego at N.Y. Mets